What Germany Thinks of the League Constitution

NO AVALANCHE of German opinion on the proposed constitution for the league of nations has reached us. Americans have been for the most part in the dark as to just how Germany did react. It was only known in a general way that she was very anxious to see Mr. Wilson's fourteen points its cornerstone.

Editorial opinion has at length begun to sift in; and, from the German papers, it is now possible to glean a fairly comprehensive idea of the German attitude.

"Ein Völkerbund der Sieger"—a league of the victors: this is the unanimous verdict of the German press on the draft of the covenant. The Socialist "Vorwärts" employs the expression and so does the conservative organ, the "Berliner Neueste Nachrichten," which, under ordinary circumstances, would be ashamed of being caught in such company. And in the "Berliner Tageblatt" Count Max Montgelas, the Bavarian general who, in 1915, was dismissed for his humane conduct, declares: "The Paris draft is not that of a league of nations, but of an armed alliance against Germany." He continues:

"Conciliatory spirit and self-abnegation also have their limit. The league of nations still remains the most desirable of war objects, but only inasmuch as it rests on a just peace and as within its framework a condition of right is created and guaranteed, and not a wrong perpetuated."

The objections of the German press against the draft of the covenant may be grouped under two principal headings. The one refers to the structure of the league, more particularly to the omnipotence of the executive council and the method and conditions of admission to membership. The second is directed against Article 8 of the proposed constitution, dealing with the limitation of armaments.

The preponderance of the executive council over the meeting of the body of delegates is emphasized by the "Frankfürter Zeitung" (bourgeois radical, February 18). "This council," the paper says, "is not elected by the convention of delegates, nor by anybody else, for that matter, but, instead, the draft appoints to it the representatives of America, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan as members by divine right, so to speak, and concedes to the body of delegates the right to select four more state representatives (a minority, that is). For these four seats all the smaller states and the former neutrals (as to whose fate not a word is said) may fight among each other and also with Germany and Russia, so far as the selection is not facilitated by an *a priori* Entente majority." The paper argues that in so far as the membership of the executive council is fixed by statute, it is impossible not to include Germany and Russia; a larger representation for the minor states also is indispensable. The present method is a negation of democracy, as "any one who assumes an unalterable right to sit permanently on the council, and assures himself a majority by statute, is not behaving democratically and betrays a nervous anxiety instead of showing confidence." The present system encourages favoritism within the league and blackmail in regard to outsiders.

"Vorwärts" (February 17) declares itself in favor of any scheme that promises to end war. Its enthusiasm for such a plan, it says, is in direct proportion to the plausibility of the plan's success. However, the present proposal establishes, in accordance with the laws of power, merely a league of the states that won the war, and gives these states forthwith five seats in the executive council. "Thereby the league partakes at once of a trustlike character. The five great conqueror states act as its founders, making the preponderance of England and America manifest; the rest of the states are treated as outsiders who may acquire the right of admission through the good will of the founders. The question presents itself, On what this good will shall depend; What fees the several states will have to pay for admission."

According to the "Berliner Neueste Nachrichten" (conservative, February 17) the proceedings at Paris justify the apprehension that the member states will have no real rights in the league, that the executive council, and not the body of delegates, will be the decisive instance. The Kölnische Zeitung (national liberal) points out the parallelism between the tripartite machinery of the league and that established by the Hague convention in 1907, adding that of the three "the executive council is the real soul of the league." The division of powers and functions among the three organs, executive council, body of delegates and secretariat, reminds the Hague correspondent of the "Berliner Tageblatt" (bourgeois radical, February 28) of the American Constitution, although in other respects the draft is more an English than an American product. That the whole draft bears a distinct Anglo-Saxon stamp seems to this writer beyond question; the Anglo-Saxon character is indicated already by the use of the term "covenant," which is untranslatable into either French or German.

The chief concern of the German press (as that of the French) may be summed up in the question: Will the covenant, in its present form, bring security to the nation? But whereas French opinion is divided on the point (Capus answers the question in the affirmative, Pertinax emphatically in the negative), the German answer is a unanimous *No*. Professor Walter Schücking, who was appointed member of the German peace delegation, declares in the "Frankfurter Zeitung" (February 28) that "as long as we are not included in this league it is nothing but a colossal alliance directed against us, as every threat or danger of aggression is made a common concern of the entire membership." And before Germany is permitted to join, those already members may fix conditions in a one-sided fashion; above all, they have the power of limiting armaments for the candidate for admission without consulting it, whereas inside of the league the limit is set by agreement of the members.

It is in Article 8, providing for the limitation of armaments, that the greatest danger for Germany is discerned. Professor Schücking says:

"Instead of setting a general standard of reduction, say, to 25 per cent of the pre-war military and naval footing, as in the project drafted by the German Society for International Law, the geographical situation and other circumstances are to be taken into account in each case. This provision, when operated by a majority hostile to us, contains a menace. Naturally, if carried out loyally by an impartial instance, nobody benefits more by it than ourselves."

The above quoted editorial of the "Frankfürter Zeitung" for February 18 is even more outspoken:

"To put it briefly, France appears not to be prepared for an honorable and radical disarmament. Rather, there seems to be no doubt that it is precisely France who promises herself great advantages from the regulation that in limiting armaments the geographical position of a country shall be considered. Then the position of France will be found in Paris to be far more unfavorable than that of Germany.

"If one considers that the hint about naval disarmament is concealed in an intricate wording, that furthermore the ominous executive council has the power to fix the limit of armament through majority vote in a different key for each country, that finally 'in countries in which the control of the traffic (in arms and ammunition) is necessary in the common interest,' such control is assigned to the league: then one begins to see the fulness of injustice that threatens Germany in all these questions if Wilson is unable to restrain the bellicose spirit of the neighbors of our German republic."

Similarly, the "Vorwärts" recognizes in Article 8 the express desire "to secure power forever for those now powerful and to keep those now powerless forever impotent." On the other hand, the Socialist organ admits that "this will depend also on the spirit of execution and other circumstances now indeterminable."

The "Berliner Neueste Nachrichten" (February 17) says:

"A tendency of tutelage is to be discerned in Article 8, which . . . expressly stipulates the consideration of the geographical position and other circumstances of each country in fixing the limits of armaments.

"Is it not precisely a member of the executive, to wit: France, which, of all European states, considers herself as specially threatened? Should France be granted a higher standard of national armament than the rest of European states, the executive will not only wield the word of decision, but, through France's superior power, the longest arm in Europe as well. What would happen if besides Germany also a number of other states take the position that only a plenary meeting is entitled to discuss and draft the constitution of the league? Will the victors bow before this demand of morality, or will they declare the league already in existence, and make the admission to their private establishment dependent upon a two-thirds vote, which they will always be in the position to employ, through their own numerical strength and through their retinue of economic vassals, whenever they want to usher in a state agreeable to them, while it will be extremely difficult for a country not member of the executive to secure the two-thirds vote for a state enjoying the disfavor of the 'high council'?"

All these objections and apprehensions notwithstanding, "Vorwärts" recognizes a distinct advance upon the old condition in the adoption of the arbitration principle:

"To be sure, it would take a strong faith to expect that the decision will always coincide with the demands of pure international justice. Yet the recognition of the majority principle in settling international disputes signifies an advance toward reason, as it makes possible to reach through a bloodless method the decision which would in all probability result from a bloody proceeding. . . . Arbitration will not eliminate international rivalry, but it will place it on a higher level of civilization, just as the elections to the national assembly represent a higher level than does street fighting between government troops and Spartacists. Majority does not mean intrinsic truth or justice, simply a legal force which one is sensible enough to recognize without waiting for tangible proof of its superiority."

It is another question whether Germany can trust the methods of arbitration provided for in the covenant. Professor Schücking, in the article quoted above, deplores that—

"although the entire development of international law has led to the demand for an impartial tribunal to adjudicate political disputes of states, although all along the line the cry has been for taking politics out from the procedure of international mediation—as this, when exercised by the governments themselves, always took the character of prejudiced intervention—in spite of all this, the Paris statute transfers mediation to an executive council, composed as a purely diplomatic authority from the representatives of the five great powers and those of four other states designated by the body of delegates."

The Hague correspondent of the "Berliner Tageblatt" has the same danger in mind when he warns against appointing, as proposed, the ambassadors of the several powers into the executive council. "The interests which the executive council is supposed to serve," he says, "are, as Wilson himself has pointed out, profoundly different from the diplomatic relations of one country to another." Such "personal union between the post of an ambassador and that of a representative on the executive council" would substantiate the charge that the league of nations is nothing but the Holy Alliance restored.

It may seem curious that the clauses relating to colonial rule and the mandatary system do not cause much excitement. The Hague correspondent of the "Berliner Tageblatt" merely points out that the plan of mandataries is predetermined by the different forms of British rule in various parts of the world, and sees in its acceptance a distinct British victory. The "Frankfürter Zeitung" dismisses the topic with the remark that the covenant strives to cover the theft of the German colonies with a fig leaf.

A very strong note is sounded by "Vorwärts" in reference to Article 20, the "labor clause." It quotes the provision in full:

"The high contracting parties will endeavor to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labor for men, women and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend; and to that end agree to establish as part of the organization of the league a permanent bureau of labor."

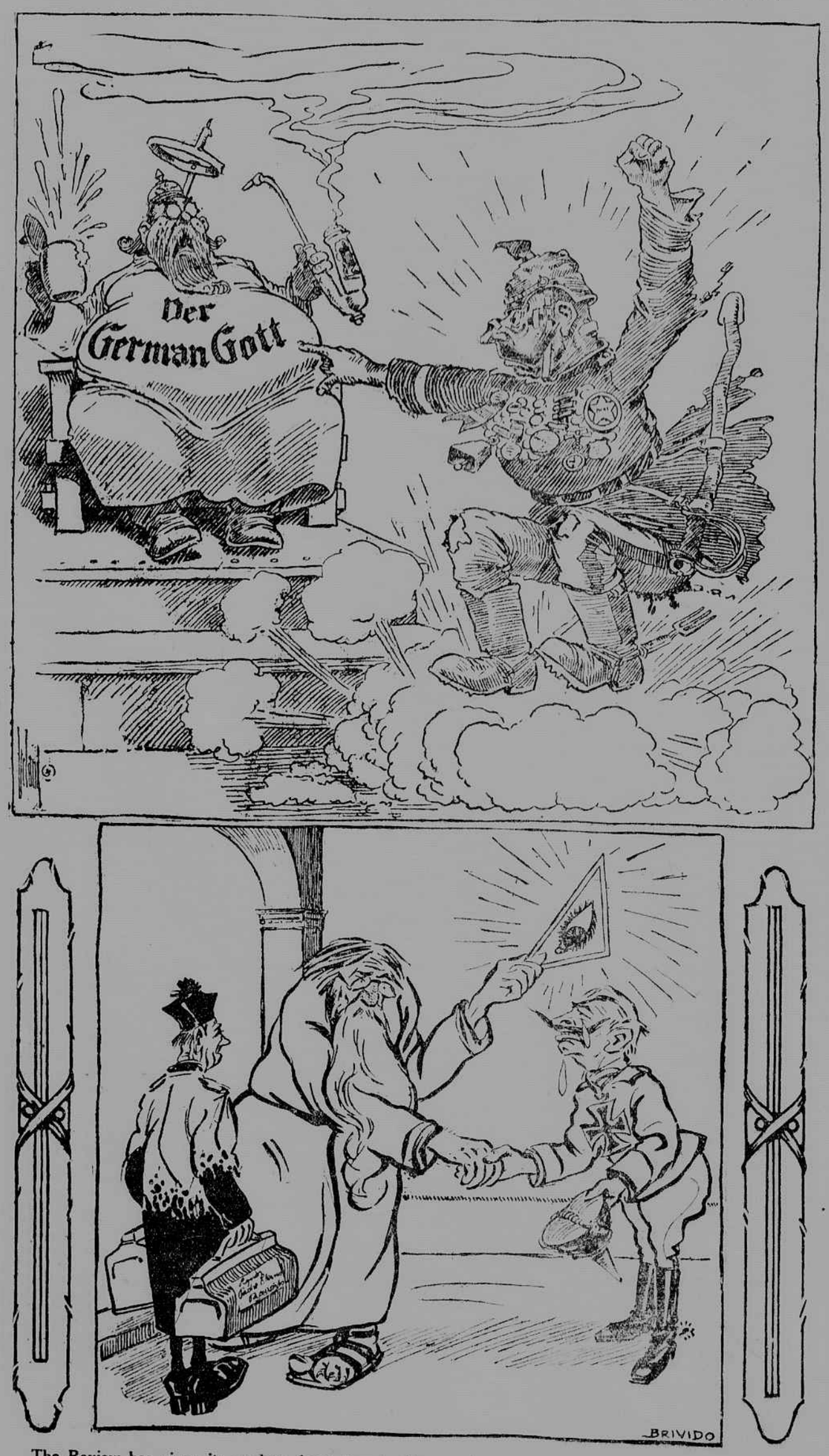
"What does it mean," "Vorwärts" asks—

"that 'the high contracting parties will endeavor,' etc., etc.? It means less than nothing; it means that the demands of Leeds and Berne have as little chance to find favor before the league of nations as the exhaustive proposal prepared by the German government for the peace conference.

"One asks in astonishment, What may be the standing of the working class in the Entente countries, since it is still possible to treat its demands in such fashion? And it must be averred that the present German government exhibits a hundred times more understanding for the demands of English, American and French workers than the Entente chieftains, founders of the league, who dare to brush aside all the needs, cares and desires of the proletariat with a politely sarcastic gesture. . . . The founders seem to have overlooked the fact that the future of the league of nations depends not on the progress of capitalistic business, but on the wellbeing of the working populations. A fundamental contrast obtains here between the views of the men who 'over there' still rule and those ascendant on our side, a contrast which is destined to play a significant rôle both in the making and the future of the league."

"A compromise between Wilsonian idealism and the materialism of others" is the league covenant as the German press sees it—"a compromise between the Wilsonian programme based on the honest coöperation of the peoples at last cured of armament fever and alliance psychose on the one hand, and the legalistically quibbling project of the French government, intent upon the securing of war spoils and the perpetuation of the present anti-German coalition on the other," says the "Frankfürter Zeitung." And, according to this newspaper, the "ultimate reproach" to the Paris project is that "it reckons too much with momentary and passing aims; that it is determined much more by the French spirit of revenge than by Wilson's will to the commonwealth. France and England think too much in the terms of to-day. That is, perhaps, the reason why a few days after the close of the Socialist conference at Berne the rulers of the Western states appear before the peoples with a scheme in which international coöperation in production and in distribution of raw materials is not mentioned with a single word. . . . However, let us wait in calmness a few months; the dice are not cast yet." . . .

Another Bulletin on Gott



The Review has given its readers, from time to time, various pictorial reports concerning the mood and whereabouts of Wilhelm's former partner, the good old German Gott. He was last pictured in these columns as offering his services to the Soldiers and Workers' Council, whose members he addressed as "Kamerad." That report emanated from Switzerland. But according to the latest cartoon bulletins, this could hardly have been authentic; for we now see him in the act of departing for his home in Paradise (see sticker on satchel), bidding farewell to the lachrymose former Kaiser, whose posture is humbleness itself compared with that shown in the picture at the top of the page. In the latter we see him at the height of his military reverses, approaching Gott in a very great fury, shouting: "You're fired!" This cartoon is from "The Columbus Evening Dispatch," while the lower cartoon comes from "Il 420," Florence.

The Czarina's Last Love Letter

THE Chicago poet, Carl Sandburg, says "The Tacoma Times," has brought back to America from Stockholm a most remarkable letter. It is a letter said to have been written by the unhappy Czarina of Russia to the Czar just before the latter's abdication. Mr. Sandburg is quoted as calling it "the strangest letter of love, politics, war and religion ever written by a woman." The text of the letter, as published by the above-mentioned paper, follows:

"Tsarkoe Selo, Feb. 27, 1917.

"My Best Beloved: Sorrow and a hurt was inside of me when I let you go by yourself without any company at all from our rare little Bebe. What a ghastly time it is we are living through! And our parting at this time makes it all the more ghastly. For now when you are tired and worn out I cannot be near by to take care of you.

"God has laid a heavy cross on you. I wish deep within me that I could help you carry this burden. You are brave and plucky. With all my soul I am suffering with you, more than I can say in any words I write you. What can I do more than pray to God and pray again? Our dear friend (Rasputin), who now finds himself in the other world, he, too, prays to God for you. There he is near to us. But how willingly I would consent to hear his comforting and quiet voice now. I am convinced God is going to reward you for what you must now suffer and stand against. But how long must we now wait?

"It does seem as though our situation is going to improve. My dear, all you need is to be firm and show the strength of your hand! That is just what the Russians need. You have never failed to show them kindness and goodness of heart; let them now understand that your fist is doubled and ready! They ask that of you themselves. Many have said lately to me, 'We need the knout.' It is strange, but such is the nature of the Slav.

"To be firm now means to be cruel and warmly loving at one and the same time. From the time they first came to know you and Kalinjin (Minister Protopopov) they have been more quiet. You must teach them to be afraid of you—your affection is too little for them. A child that cares for its father must be afraid to be disobedient and bring sorrow to its father. Sometimes a man must drive with tight reins, not loose, never letting go, but keeping the strongest hand he knows how to use. Then people will think more highly of him as a good man. If he is always soft they will not understand him. The human heart is mysterious. The upper classes do not in their hearts care for a mild course of conduct. In association with them a spirit of determination is needed, particularly now.

"I was sorry that we could not be alone at our last breakfast together. The children wanted to be there, too. Poor Xenia (the Czar's sister) is to be pitied. Her daughter has married herself into a worthless and vicious family and taken a husband who is beneath her. I think she has gone far wrong. How much sorrow and suffering there is in the world now! A great heart pain torments humanity and there seems to be no end to it.

"I wish we could find a way to live in quiet and peace. May it be granted us to be strong and struggle forward on our thorny way, forward to a radiant goal! I hope you will not have any difficulties with Alexiev and that you can soon come back. This is not a selfish hope. I understand only too well how the 'bellowing mob' acts when you are near. They are afraid of you now and they must be made still more afraid of you. Therefore, wherever you go they must tremble before you. Among the cabinet ministers, too, you are a power and a leader. Come back soon.

"You see what I ask of you is not for my own sake and not at all for Bebe's sake, because we know you keep us in your thoughts all the time. I know the duty that takes you away from us and that now you are needed there much more than here. So then, as quick as you can clear up your affairs be good and come back here by March 1, when I hope that all will be as it ought to be.

"Come home. Your wife—your helpmeet stands on watch back of the front. It is true she cannot do much. But all who have been near by know she is your supporter.

"My eyes ache with tears. I am going from the station straight for Jungfur Marie's church, because it is there we have always been together. This will quiet and strengthen me, and I shall pray God for you, my angel.

"Ah, my God, how I love you! Always more and more, my love for you is as deep as the sea. My affection for you is immeasurable.

"Sleep quiet. Don't cough. The change of climate will help you to a better health. May white angels protect you! Christ is with you and Mother Mary will never leave you. Our friend (Rasputin) has committed us to his guardianship. I send you my blessing and embrace you tight, and rest your tired head against my breast. Oh, it will be bitter for me with the nights alone.

"You are without sun and sunshine, but all of my warm, burning love enfolds you, you my only. Light of my life, my treasure given me from Almighty God, know my arms are around you and my lips touch yours. We are always together and we shall never be parted. Goodby, my dear! Come back soon. Be good, go to Mother Mary's church, where I have so often prayed for you."

Where Conscience Does Not Stir

A GLIMPSE into that "mystery of mysteries," the Russian soul, is gained from a letter written by a German officer, on duty in Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, to his brother, a Lutheran minister in Western Germany. The officer was in charge of the jail where the slayers of General Eichhorn, the German Governor of the Ukraine, were imprisoned, and in this capacity he had occasion to talk with a Russian girl, one of the accomplices of the assassination. The letter was published in the "Frankfurter Zeitung." It reads:

"Dear Brother:

"Outside the gates of Kiev the fight between the Hetman's troops and the peasant rebels (alias Bolsheviki) is still raging—it's the third day of bombardment. We are neutral—for the time being. It is a damned hole we are in—the most critical stage of the whole world war. Just the same, we are smoking our pipes and look forward with a fatalistic indifference to whatever may come. I have faced similar situations before and I never despaired.

"As I was making my rounds to-day in the headquarters building, I visited the jail where the political prisoners are kept. They are separated in a row of cells. I stopped in front of a corner cell, occupied by a woman who participated in the Eichhorn murder. I peered through the little window. She was lying on her berth, doubled up—I thought she was asleep.

"She notices me and raises her head for a minute. The floor of the cell is littered with books in a vase there are two chrysanthemums. Woman, what on earth have I to do with you?

"The guard reports to me she paces her cell nervously. I look straight into her eyes through the little window.

"'You are reading books?'

"'Yes.'

"'What kind?'

"'They're all Russian.'

"'Where did you learn to speak German so well?'

"'At school.'

"'Have you ever been in Germany?'

"'No.'

"'Are you Russian?'

"'My parents are Russian. My father is dead—my mother lives in Moscow. She is old and lonesome for me. She is waiting and waiting, and I can't go and see her. I can feel her sorrow.'

"'I have a mother, too. Yes, if one has a mother'——

"'What philosophy did you start out from?' I ask abruptly.

"She smiles, her eyes brighten: 'Kant. It's his ideas. Nothing is more beautiful than to live for ideas.'

"'We Germans also value Kant high. How on earth did you start out from Kant and end by becoming a terrorist?'

"'Well, if you would live in Russia. . . . If you see how the people are oppressed and tortured'——

"'And do you think that you can help the people in the way you go about it, by terror? Would it not be better to work slowly, set up schools and improve things by and by?'

"'No use—you have to open their eyes through deeds.'

"'Don't you know Kant's word about the conscience in us and the starry heavens above us?'

"She supplements: 'Yes, and about the categorical imperative.'

"'What does your conscience say?'

"'It does not stir. To live in the idea of the most beautiful life in the world.'

"'I shall write this to my brother; he also is a believer in Kant, and a minister.'

"Her eyes shine as she smiles; one can see her pretty teeth. All of a sudden I say: 'Still, Eichhorn was a good man.'

"'He was terribly cruel. He oppressed the peasants.'

"'Eichhorn was a philosopher, related through his mother to Schelling. Do you know Schelling?'

"'Yes.'

"The turn of the talk seems to have impressed her deeply. She darkens perceptibly. What thought may have crossed her mind?

"'How old are you?'

"'Thirty.'

"'Can you still feel joy? Can you look at the skies? Are you unhappy?'

"'No, I am not unhappy. But my mother in Moscow, she is waiting, she is old.'

"'Have you ever thought about death?'

"'Yes, often. But still, and forever, the idea is everything. We worship life, but we do not fear death. You see, when we throw a bomb we do not run away. If it may hit the other fellow, it may just as well hit ourselves.'

"'Can you sing?'

"'Why, surely.'

"'Do you know German songs?'

"'A few—Lorelei, for instance.'

"'Oh, Heine's.'

"'Yes.'

"'My home is where that song came from—on the Rhine. The French are there now.'

"'Yes, Germany has suffered much.'

"I drop my glance, look at her again and say: 'Goodby. I hope to see you again.'

"She answers: 'And I hope to see you too.'

"Dear Brother: The idea—and the mother. I have been through rough things these four years, but to-night I went home deeply shaken. To-night it was revealed to me for the first time how an idea—right or wrong—may be everything in a human life. Yes, this Russia does exist, after all.

"The mail has not arrived yet.

"With true love,

YOUR W."